



NUTRITION:

Family Style Meals in Child Care Settings



Best Practice Standards

- Teach appropriate portion size by using plates, bowls, and cups that are developmentally appropriate to nutritional needs
- Adults eating meals with children eat items that meet standards
- Serve small sized, age appropriate portions
- Permit children to have one or more additional servings of nutritious foods that are lower in sugar, fat, and sodium as needed to meet caloric needs of the child and teach children who require limited portions about portion size and monitor their portions

What Caregivers Can Do

- Caregivers define the structure of meals, creating a mealtime environment that facilitates eating and social exchange.
- Caregivers can model appropriate eating behaviors by sitting with children and eating the meal or snack together in family style.
- Caregivers encourage social interaction and conversation at meals.
- For infants and toddlers, caregivers promote self-feeding skills through finger and/or utensil self-feeding, transitioning to family style meals when appropriate.

Resources For More Information:

Eating Together-Eating Well Fact Sheets by Family & Community Health Sciences of Rutgers Cooperative Extension : <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/health>

Family Meals Focus Newsletters by Ellen Satter: <http://www.ellynsatter.com/newsletters.php>

References:

Is Frequency of Shared Family Meals Related to the Nutritional Health of Children and Adolescents? *Pediatrics* 2011;127;e1565.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Preventing Obesity Among Preschool Children: How Can Child-care Settings Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity? October, 2011.

The Let's Move! Child Care Checklist: Recommendations for Preschoolers, Infants and Toddlers. June, 2011. www.letsmove.gov.

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